

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

(Adopted 2003, Revised 2006)

To meet the changing needs of Westport residents and to build a greater sense of community in all segments of Westport's population, the League of Women Voters of Westport supports a strong Health District and a strong network of human services. We support increased daycare, recreation and counseling services for children, and expanded affordable housing* and transportation. We recommend that the Town adequately fund the Health and Human Services Department and hire a grants writer.

Explanation:

Recognizing that relevant town departments and supportive agencies have maintained a commendable level of health and human services, the League of Women Voters believes that these services should be extended to include:

- Increased daycare opportunities for children of working parents. This includes full-time care for younger children as well as part-time care for school-aged children. We encourage the Town to explore the use of excess school space and to work with local businesses to address unmet childcare needs.
- Expanded opportunities for unstructured recreation for all school aged children. The Town should consider expanding the use of town-owned facilities, including the schools, for recreational use after school and during evenings and weekends.
- Outreach Counselors in the middle schools to address destructive and risky behaviors, modeled on the Outreach Counselor in the high school provided by the Human Services Department.

To provide more housing options for seniors and people in reduced economic or precarious personal circumstances and to attract and retain qualified personnel to work in Westport, the League of Women Voters of Westport supports creative approaches and vigorous action to increase the availability of affordable housing for rental and/or purchase. We support the development and enforcement of health and safety standards for rental units.

To meet the needs of all Westport residents and local workers, including seniors, children and the disabled, the League of Women Voters supports adequate, affordable public transportation throughout the day, evenings and weekends. Because the current transportation options include public, private and volunteer services, we support the creation of a single source of transportation information.

Because the initiation and expansion of programs and services is costly, the League of Women Voters strongly recommends that the Town adequately fund the Health and Human Services Department and hire a grants writer.

* Please refer to the League of Women Voters of Westport's position on Housing.